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in the civil service.

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THE WHITLEY SYSTEM IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

By

J. H. MACRAE-GIBSON

London:

THE FABIAN SOCIETY

25, Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W.1

1922

PRICE ONE SHILLING

To W. M. M-G.

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In preparing this paper I have been greatly assisted by Mr. G. Chase, Staff Side Secretary of the National Whitley Council, who read through my MS., and by Messrs. R. McC. Beamish, Staff Side Secretary, Admiralty Council, and W. G. Owen, Staff Side Secretary of the Post Office Council, who supplied me with much information in regard to their respective Departments. To all of them my thanks are due. I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Sidney Webb, who also read the paper in MS., and from whom I received many valuable suggestions, some of which I have been able to embody in the course of my final revision.

J. H. M-G.

The Whitley System in the Civil Service

WHEN in 1917 the Ministry of Labour published the "Report of the Departmental Reconstruction Committee on the Relations of Employers and Employed,"[1] it was thought in some quarters that the

[1] This Committee, under the Chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. J. H. Whitley, M.P., had been appointed during the War to find some way of dealing with the very serious unrest in industry; this unrest was, perhaps, no greater than at other times, but it forced itself on the attention of the Government because, owing to the peculiar conditions of the time the work-people happened to be almost as strong as their employers, and because the conduct of the war depended so much on the smooth working of industry.

In its report, the Committee laid stress on the importance of:

(*a*) Adequate organization on the part of employers and employed.

(*b*) Greater opportunity of participating in the discussion about and adjustment of those parts of industry by which they are most affected, of the work-people in each occupation.

(*c*) Subordination of any decisions to those of the Trade Unions and Employers' Associations.

It laid down the subjects to be dealt with as

1. "Better utilization of the practical knowledge of the workpeople" . . . and the securing to them of a greater share in and responsibility for the determination and observance of "the conditions under which their work is carried on."

2. "The settlement of general principles governing the conditions of employment . . . having regard to the need for securing to the work-people a share in the increased prosperity of the industry."

3. Methods to be adopted for negotiations, adjusting wages, determining differences, and ensuring to the work-people the greatest possible security of earnings and employment.

4. Technical education, industrial research, utilization of inventions and improvement of processes.

5. Proposed legislation affecting the industry.

The Report was adopted by the Government and was urged on employers and work-people alike as the basis for a reorganization of industry. Speaking generally, the larger industries such as Agriculture, Transport, Mining, Cotton, Engineering and Shipbuilding did not respond; but Whitley Councils were set up in many others, of which the chief were: Pottery, House-building, Woollen, Hosiery, Heavy Chemicals, Furniture-making, Bread-baking, Match-making, Vehicle-building, Electricity supply.

See *History of Trade Unionism*, 2nd Ed. 1920. S. and B. Webb, pages, 490, 646, etc. *Joint Industrial Councils Bulletin*, published by

application of the principles of that Report might inaugurate a new epoch in industry. Many people hailed the coming of what was soon called Whitleyism as a saviour from Industrial Anarchy on the one hand and from Socialism on the other. In 1922, no one thinks that a new epoch in industry has come, and no one really thinks that Whitleyism will save industry from any of the ills that beset it. Four years have been more than enough to destroy the credit of Industrial Whitleyism. Yet Whitleyism is still alive and shows signs of vigour, not in that industrial system for which it was devised, but in an environment that many people declared to be wholly unsuitable to its operation.

In the Civil Service, the Whitley System has taken root and has developed an extraordinarily complex organization in the short space of a couple of years. It is no exaggeration to say that no more elaborate system has been devised in the history of Conciliation. For this reason alone some examination of Civil Service Whitleyism must be of interest to the social student. In the course of examination it will be possible to inquire if the failure of Industrial Whitleyism is inherent in the proposals or if it results from special conditions peculiar to the modern industrial State.

Moreover, in the process of examining the working of Civil Service Whitleyism, some notion can be gained of the possibilities of the movement towards joint control of industry and of the difficult constitutional questions that must, in practice, arise in the course of any attempt to secure that control. Indeed, to the Constitutionalist the study of Civil Service Whitleyism is already full of interest, while to the State Socialist it provides much material for reflection on the working of the State Service so essential to the success of his ideas.

THE STRUGGLE FOR WHITLEYISM.

The very struggle for Whitleyism reflected a great change in the Civil Service and had important reactions

Industrial Councils Division, Ministry of Labour. *The Whitley Councils: the Growth of the Movement,* by J. H. Whitley in *Employers' Year Book,* May, 1920, pp. 102-105. "Whitley Committee: first report of the Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction on relations between the Employers and the Employed" in *Labour and Capital after the War,* edited by Sir Sydney John Chapman. 1918. pp. 273-280.

on the psychology of Civil Servants. At the time when the Government, in pursuit of its general policy of conciliation, was anxiously pressing the acceptance of the Whitley System on Employers and Trade Unionists alike, the Civil Service as a whole was sharing in the general industrial unrest.

The immediate causes of Civil Service discontent were first, the increased cost of living, and secondly, a determined attempt by the Treasury to force on its general classes an eight- instead of a seven-hour day. There were, however, old-standing grievances in respect of the method of recruitment, the division of the Service into almost watertight compartments, methods of promotion and so on that provided a standing basis of discontent. The MacDonnell Commission,[1] which reported in 1914, had recognized that the Service was too inelastic, that much suffering arose from the fact that in many cases men were too good for their work, and that the barriers between classes, based on the education and the social position of new entrants, were too strong, but the outbreak of the war had prevented its recommendations from being put into operation. Consequently, discontent increased, and, with the passage of time and the development of staff ideas during the war, became intensified.

It was, however, the threat of increased hours that forced the various and often hostile classes of Civil Servants into association, and caused the formation of an *ad hoc* committee to deal with the danger. The unexpected strength and unanimity of the hostility caused the abandonment of the proposal; but the habit of association which was thus begun, remained, and was strengthened under the pressure of the increased cost of living. During the war Civil Servants were working incredibly long hours, they found themselves thrust into positions of responsibility where their powers of initiative had full scope, they were peculiarly exposed to the dangers of air-raids, and at the same time their real remuneration lagged far behind that of the rest of the population.

[1] Royal Commission on the Civil Service First Report published (Cd. 6209). Appendix to First Report (Cd. 6210); Second Report (Cd. 6534); Appendix to Second Report (Cd. 6535); Third Report (Cd. 6739); Appendix to Third Report (Cd. 6740); Fourth Report (Cd. 7338); First Appendix to Fourth Report (Cd. 7339); Second Appendix to Fourth Report (Cd. 7340).

Thus the old objections to taking part in organization were being destroyed by economic pressure from without and by psychological changes within. Staff Associations were increasing their membership, and what was more important, were changing their tone. Departmental chiefs were becoming alarmed at the new tendencies among their staffs, especially in view of the constantly increasing departmental responsibilities. The opportunity afforded by the Governmental Whitley propaganda was too good to be lost, and staff associations concentrated on pressing the Government to apply the Whitley medicine for industrial ills to its own staff. The Whitley Committee had not suggested the application of the Whitley System to the Civil Service; but when its Report went to the Cabinet it was expressly pointed out to Ministers, in a memorandum by Mrs. Webb, that whilst the system would fail in industry, the Government would be forced to adopt it for its own employees. Nevertheless, this opinion was ignored, and the development of the agitation in the Civil Service seems hardly to have been foreseen by the Government. Certainly it caused it much embarrassment and met with strong resistance; the embarrassment of the Government was naturally increased because of elements in itself that were favourable to the extension and of which the Service took full advantage. This continued agitation on the part of the staffs, together with scornful pressure by the business men, forced the Government to give way as regards the industrial establishments; but it was not till March, 1919, that the weight of staff and public opinion, perhaps assisted by alarm on the part of many Departmental Chiefs, led to the appointment of an Interdepartmental Committee on the Application of the Whitley Report to Government Establishments. This Committee adopted a report recommending the introduction of a modified Whitley System into the Administrative and Legal Departments of the Civil Service.

Far from appeasing the agitation, the issue of this report only raised it to a storm. The Committee had been a purely Official Side affair, and while recommending the establishment of a National Joint Council, Departmental Councils, District or Local Office Committees and Sectional Committees of the Departmental Councils, deliberately laid down the functions of the National Coun-

cil as "*consultative and advisory only.*"[1] It was careful to exclude "questions of policy, administration, and, save in their underlying principles, all questions of promotion, superannuation and discipline." Fortunately it concluded by suggesting the calling of a National Conference.[2]

When this Conference came together in April, 1919, the Staff representatives made it very plain that with a Council so restricted beforehand as to its scope and power, the Staff Associations could have nothing to do; they were prepared for joint discussion, but would not accept any dictated constitution. The Government, much pressed by industrial unrest and still desirous of pursuing the path of conciliation, was, in addition, somewhat alarmed at the possibility of disloyalty in the Civil Service. It found itself therefore constrained to agree, through its representatives, to the setting up of a Joint Committee consisting of thirty members divided equally between Official and Staff Side nominees to prepare and submit a detailed agreed scheme for a Civil Service Whitley System.

This Committee met under the chairmanship of Sir Malcolm Ramsay with Mr. Stuart Bunning as Vice-Chairman, and after much discussion, issued in May, 1919, a report which was adopted by the Cabinet and by the Staff Associations as the constitution of the National Whitley Council.[3]

The Committee was careful to make it clear that the setting up of the Whitley machinery would not interfere with the continuance of the Civil Service Arbitration Board. And this still exists and operates under certain circumstances when agreement cannot be reached on the National Council, besides being able, if necessary, to deal with matters brought directly before it by associations.[4]

[1] In the case of the Civil Service of the Union of South Africa where, at the end of 1921, a Civil Service Whitley Scheme has been introduced, this limitation has actually been accepted, and the functions of the Whitley Council are "consultative and advisory only."

[2] "Report on the Application of the Whitley Report to the Administrative Departments of the Civil Service."

[3] "Report of the National Provisional Joint Committee on the Application of the Whitley Report to the Administrative Departments of the Civil Service." [Cmd. 198.]

[4] The Board, under the original title of the "Conciliation and Arbitration Board for Government Employees," was set up early in 1917

The Board consists of two members and a Chairman. One member is appointed from the panel of employers' representatives, the other from the panel of employees' representatives, and the Chairman is not agreed in any way, but is a Government nominee. The panel of employees' representatives being a matter between the Ministry of Labour and the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, it happens that the Civil Servants concerned have no power of nomination nor even of agreement, and the Board thus consists of two employers' representatives and one representative of the general public.

It is not surprising that much dissatisfaction with its composition exists in the Civil Service, and that efforts are being made to secure a more impartial tribunal.

Its first award was made on May-day, 1917, when it granted a war bonus to the adult permanent employees of the G.P.O., and of its first eighty awards, some thirty were concerned with war bonus. Between May 1st, 1917, and August 1st, 1919, it heard ninety-nine claims, particulars of which are given in Vol. I of *Awards and Agreements,* published by the Stationery Office.

Since the institution of the National Whitley Council, the number of claims submitted has been greatly reduced; thus, between August, 1919, and July, 1921,

as a result of agitation and negotiations mainly by the National Joint Committee of Post Office Associations and by the Civil Service Federation. The occasion arising from the rapid increase in the cost of living and the way in which Civil Service wages lagged behind those of the rest of the working community.

Its terms of reference are peculiar and only provide for claims for increased remuneration and not for Official Side proposals for decreased remuneration. They read:

"To deal by way of conciliation or arbitration with questions arising with regard to claims for increased remuneration (whether permanent or temporary owing to war conditions) made by classes of employees of Government Departments, other than classes of employees who are engaged wholly or mainly by way of manual labour of a kind common to Government and other employment, and in respect of whom the Board are satisfied, on the certificate of the Government Department concerned, that adequate means for the settlement of such questions have already been provided, or that changes of remuneration always follow the decision of the recognized machinery applicable to the district generally.

"Provided that for the present and until experience has been gained of the working of the scheme, the Board shall not entertain applications for permanent increases of salary from the more highly paid classes of employees of any Government Department, namely, classes of officers with salaries of £500 or over or placed on scales of salary rising to £500 or over."

there were only nineteen as compared with nearly a hundred in the preceding two years—and these have been mostly cases of disagreement between the Official and Staff Sides of the National or Departmental Whitley Councils. In several important cases the Board has proceeded by sending the parties away for further discussion, so that eventually agreement has been arrived at without an award being necessary.

The value of the Board to the Civil Service, even in its present somewhat imperfect state and with its limited terms of reference, is generally recognized; indeed, its existence is essential as providing a way out of many Whitley Council deadlocks. Its value would be much increased if the Chairman were agreed and if its scope were made more general.[1]

THE CONSTITUTION.

The constitution recommended by the Committee laid down the functions of the National Whitley Council in terms closely following those of the original Whitley report, and specified them as being the securing of :

1. Provision of the best means for utilizing the ideas and experience of the staff.
2. Means for securing to the staff a greater share in and responsibility for the determination and observance of the conditions under which their duties are carried out.
3. Determination of the general principles governing conditions of service, e.g., recruitment, hours, promotion, discipline, tenure, remuneration and superannuation.
4. The encouragement of the further education of Civil Servants and their training in higher administration and organization.
5. Improvement of office machinery and organization and the provision of opportunities for the full consideration of suggestions by the staff on this subject.

[1] After the MS. had left my hands the Government announced the abolition of the Arbitration Board and further declared their intention to change the composition of the Official Side. I have accordingly left the text as it stands and dealt with the new situation in Appendix I.
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6. Proposed legislation so far as it has a bearing upon the position of Civil Servants in relation to their employment.

In place of the original proposal that the Council should be merely consultative and advisory, it was provided that:

"The decisions of the Council shall be arrived at by agreement between the two sides, shall be signed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, shall be reported to the Cabinet, and thereupon shall become operative."

This is a vital clause. It ensures that the Council shall not be a place for the mere pronouncing of pious opinions, it gives weight to its deliberations and prevents them from being ignored in the way that has become familiar through the fate of Consumers' Councils. Without this clause the Staff Side would have been little more than a standing deputation and the associations would not have consented to take part. On the other hand, it has been fastened on by constitutionalists as making a serious constitutional innovation. They suggest that it is in effect the setting up of a new authority in the State, different from and superior to the Executive, and even in a sense the rival of the Legislature.

While it is conceivable that such a development might eventually take place, it must clearly be stated that the Official Side always considered that nothing in the Whitley constitution affected either the overriding power of Parliament or the continuance of Ministerial responsibility. This view was acquiesced in by the Staff Side, and all discussions have been conditioned by it. The considered opinion of the Council has been expressed in a joint statement, which says:

"The establishment of Whitley Councils cannot relieve the Government of any part of its responsibility to Parliament, and Ministers and Heads of Departments acting under the general or specific authority of Ministers must take such action as may be required in any case in the public interest. This condition is inherent in the constitutional doctrines of Parliamentary government and Ministerial responsibility, and Ministers can neither waive nor escape it.

"It follows from this constitutional principle that while the acceptance by the Government of the Whitley System as regards the Civil Service implies an intention

to make the fullest possible use of Whitley procedure, the Government has not surrendered, and cannot surrender, its liberty of action in the exercise of its authority and the discharge of its responsibilities in the public interest."

Nevertheless, as the Official Side represents the Government, this statement emphasizes that fact and provides for administrative emergencies, and does not modify the effect of a clause strongly held by the Staff Side as making the acceptance of the Council worth the while of its constituents.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL.

The National Council consists of fifty-four members, half appointed by the Government to form the Official Side and half by the Staff Associations grouped in certain ways. The Official Side members must be " persons of standing (who may or may not be Civil Servants) and shall include at least one representative of the Treasury and one representative of the Ministry of Labour," and within those limitations the Government may appoint whom it likes. In practice, it has filled the places with Departmental Chiefs, the chair being occupied by the Chief Establishment Officer of the Treasury, who, under the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is the head of the whole Civil Service.[1]

This composition of the Official Side has led to the accusation that the whole Council is a group of Civil Servants who are particularly and dishonestly occupied in fixing each others' salaries. As a matter of fact, the salaries and conditions of service of Departmental Chiefs have never been considered by the Council. In any case, the relationship that exists between Departmental Chiefs and Ministers is so close as to make any such underhand collusion unthinkable; the relationship is indeed so close that the Departmental Chiefs, and especially the Treasury members, are more truly representative of the mind of the Government than would be an Official Side constituted in such other way as has been suggested, and as will be described later.

If there is a danger, it is that the members of the Official Side, owing to their sense of responsibility to

[1] Since this was written, a change in the composition of the Official Side has been announced. It is now to include M.P.'s. See Appendix I.

their political chiefs, to a natural taste for the exercise of authority over subordinates, and to their traditional sense of honour, shall be even more Governmental in their attitude than the Cabinet itself.

Again it is provided that the Staff Side shall also "consist of persons of standing (who may or may not be Civil Servants) appointed by . . . groups of Staff Associations."

These groups with their approximate numbers of members and of representatives are now (November, 1921) as follows:

Group.	Approx. Numbers.	Reps.
Post Office	130,000	9
Civil Service Confederation ...	56,000	10
Joint Consultative Committee[1] ...	7,000	3
Institution of Professional Civil Servants	3,000	2
Temporary Staffs Confederation...	47,000	3

The importance of this method of selecting Staff Side representatives is not immediately apparent. In industry at large the principle that the Trade Union represents its members and that in any particular industry the grouped Trade Unions form the employees' side of a Council was not in question when the original Whitley report was issued. But in the Civil Service Staff Associations were far from having secured complete recognition, and negotiations between staffs and departments or

[1] The Joint Consultative Committee is a means by which the following Societies are loosely combined—Society of Civil Servants, Association of 1st Division Civil Servants, Association of Inspectors of Taxes, Civil Service Legal Society.

This allocation is an adjustment between the claims of numbers and those of interests. Thus the Post Office Group comprises some half dozen Associations of which the U.P.W. and the Post Office Engineering Federation account for over a hundred thousand members. The Civil Service Confederation consists of eighty associations ranging in size from the Civil Service Clerical Association, with a membership of some 20,000, to the Senior and Junior Clerks of the Board of Control, Scotland, with a membership of seven; its members are of the most diverse character, including Officers of Customs and Excise, Executive Officers, Trade and Market Officers, Sasine Office Clerks, Draughtsmen from three Departments, Ordnance Survey Civil Staff, County Court Officers, Sorting Assistants, Royal Parks Employees and Established men from the various Dockyards. The Institute of Professional Civil Servants again, represents no less than forty societies of every sort of professional men and women, while the Society of Civil Servants admits any established salaried Civil Servant to membership from an Under Secretary to a Clerical Assistant and is careful to disclaim any intention of acting at all like a Trade Union. The allocation of seats is subject to revision and has already been varied once in the interests of the Joint Consultative Committee and of the Temporary Staffs Confederation.

between staffs and the Treasury were always liable to be complicated and rendered difficult by controversies over the competence of Associations to represent their members. The acceptance by the Government of this clause in the constitution is in itself a complete recognition of the associations, and has had a wide effect apart from the operation of the Whitley System. It explains the recent growth in the number of associations which has gone on along with a great movement towards amalgamation.

SCOPE OF THE COUNCIL.

The National Council covers all Civil Servants except those dealt with by the Joint Bodies for the Government Industrial Establishments.

In the original report it was remarked: "There may be problems of common interest to the Civil Servants covered by the Joint Bodies for the Administrative Departments and the Civil Servants covered by the Joint Bodies for the Industrial Establishments. Experience will indicate the best kind of machinery for the consideration of such problems, and the National Council will, we anticipate, keep in touch with the Joint Bodies for the Industrial Establishments when questions of this kind arise."

A joint committee has already been set up in the Admiralty to maintain a liaison between these two sides of the Civil Service, and the tendency will be for the connection to be drawn closer in time, but at present the Councils for the Industrial Establishments would be more appropriately treated in a survey of Industrial Whitleyism, and we shall confine ourselves to dealing with the Council for the Administrative and Legal Departments of the Civil Service.

DEPARTMENTAL COUNCILS.

In the Report it was contemplated that the National Council should be supplemented by Departmental Councils and by District and Office (or Works) Committees. In regard to Departmental Councils, certain principles were enunciated, but the actual constitutions were left to be discussed by a joint meeting in each Department, subject to approval by the National Council. The National Council itself drew up a Model Constitution

which has formed the basis of the constitutions of the various Departmental Councils; apart from this the National Council has conformed to the recommendations of the Ramsay-Bunning Committee and has not scrutinized the individual constitutions "beyond the point necessary to secure that they are in harmony with Whitley principles and are . . . on uniform lines."

COMPOSITION OF DEPARTMENTAL COUNCILS.

The same formula applies to the Official Sides of Departmental Councils as to the National Council. The members must be persons of standing. The application is more difficult, and in certain Departments Staff Sides complain that the members of the Official Side are of such low official standing that they are not entrusted by the Head of the Department with any powers, and consequently only act as a channel for conveying the views of the Staff Side to those who are responsible for decisions. It is the very general practice, however, for the permanent Head to occupy the chair and for him to be supported by his immediate deputy, the members of his Board, if one exists, the Chief Establishment Officer and such Chiefs of Sub-Departments as the Accountant and Controller-General, and so on. Official Side members are appointed by the Minister or by the permanent Head of a Department.

Members of the Staff Side are appointed by the association or group of associations having members employed in the Department. It is provided that where an association has members outside as well as inside the Department, the electorate shall be the members of the association in the Department, but that *it shall be open to the electorate so constituted to choose as their representative any member or official of the association who is employed in the Civil Service, or if not a person so employed, is a full-time officer of the association.* The election shall in all cases be under the authority of the association concerned. Thus the Departmental constitution emphasizes the complete recognition of staff associations by the Government which followed on the acceptance of the Whitley System.

Departmental Councils have the same object and functions as the National Council so far as they have a

special application to the particular department, subject to the condition that the determination of general questions is reserved for the National Council. In their own sphere the Departmental Councils enjoy complete autonomy. The National Council does not in any way act as a court of appeal, though it gives advice to Departmental Councils in cases of difficulty, and even acts as a mediator when deadlock has occurred between two sides of a Departmental Council.

SUBORDINATE COMMITTEES.

Subordinate to the Departmental Councils are the local office, works, district and regional committees in which purely local matters may be discussed. Once again the associations are the basis of Staff Side representation, while the area chief acts as Official Side chairman and appoints his colleague or colleagues from among his immediate heads of staff. These Committees are definitely subordinate to the Departmental Councils, and their decisions are reported to them for ratification or rejection; they are in no sense the basis of the Whitley structure which is the Staff Association and they have no representation on the superior bodies. Apart from the record in their minutes of discussion and from the report of agreements or disagreements they have no access to the Departmental Councils. Official Side and Staff Side alike can approach the Councils by means of the representatives of their respective Staff Associations, and in the case of the Official Side the normal practice is for it to report and take instructions from the Head of the Department before entering into discussions with the Staff Side.

THE EXTENT OF THE WHITLEY ORGANIZATION.

Departmental Councils have been set up in the great majority of Government Departments (see Appendix II), and their machinery and their Subordinate Committees have developed in very varying degrees. A department like the Customs and Excise, for instance, will have as many as a dozen sectional or grade committees; seven office and more than seventy local committees, covering

the whole of the United Kingdom and Ireland from Inverness to Plymouth and from Grimsby to Galway. (See Appendix III.) The Admiralty Council in turn has District Committees at its outports which in turn have office committees dependent through them on the Admiralty Departmental Council, while each of the Admiralty Departments has its own Office Committee deriving directly from the Admiralty Council.

In the case of the Post Office the machinery is perhaps not actually more elaborate, but owing to the great size of the Department it certainly appears so. To begin with, there are two separate Councils, quite independent and each with the full powers of a Departmental Council —one is the Post Office Whitley Council, the other the Post Office (Engineering) Whitley Council. Between these two some connection is maintained by means of a standing joint committee; this is of recent institution, but there are signs that its functions will become increasingly important. Under the Post Office Council, besides the usual *ad hoc,* standing or special committees, are first of all two standing committees, one for the Supervising Grades and a Clerical Sub-committee. There are committees in each of the big sub-departments such as the Secretaries' Office, the Accountant-General's Department, the Savings Bank Department, and so on, to the number of eight as in the case of other Departmental Councils. In addition there are committees for the London District Postal Service, the London Telephone Service and the Stores Department, each of which in turn has a number of local committees subordinate to itself much in the same way as in the case of the Admiralty. Finally there is a Local Committee for each Head Post Office Area and of these there are actually some thousand, a number which completely dwarfs the local committees even of the Customs and Excise Departments.

From these and a few other great Departments like the Ministry of Labour, we pass to others with two or three office committees and a few local committees and to still others in which the Departmental Council and a sub-committee or two can provide for the needs of the whole Department and in which no such network of subordinate committees has been required. Thus the machinery of the different Departments has reached very different states of development, and although it will be

impossible to give details of the work of every Council some estimate will be attempted in the sections that deal with Whitley Methods and Achievements.

METHODS.

It is provided that in the Councils each side shall act as a whole, and there is no provision for voting on matters that arise. Each side in its preliminary meetings goes over the agenda and decides upon its attitude, which is stated by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman as spokesmen for the Official and Staff Sides respectively. Fresh points of view arising in the course of discussion are considered by the members of the two sides in informal pauses or in formal adjournments, and the decisions so reached are communicated through the spokesmen. In the National Council particularly, the tendency is for meetings to resolve themselves into formal duels between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman; occasional relief is afforded by speakers on either side, but in the nature of things, with the Official Side representing the Government and the Staff Side standing for some quarter of a million Civil Servants, the dangers of the expression of conflicting points of view by members of the same side is so great that independent speaking is not encouraged. Individual members usually assist their chairmen by briefing.

The possibility of really useful discussion under such circumstances would appear to be very remote; but the difficulty of securing a free exchange of opinions and of arriving at agreements based on necessary compromise is got over by a free use of Joint Committees. Every matter requiring detailed consideration is referred to its appropriate Committee where it is thrashed out by genuine give-and-take across a table. Here the two sides explore each other's minds in an atmosphere of compromise, and the discoveries they make mutually are communicated to their colleagues in Staff and Official Side meetings. In committee the division into sides is by no means so rigid as in the full Council; this freedom is increased because membership of Committees is not restricted to members of the Council and both sides take advantage of the fact to appoint experts of all sorts.

Nor is free and informal discussion secured only in Committees. In the case of the National Council each

side has two secretaries who are, in the case of the Staff Side, assisted by a full-time staff of clerks and typists; in the case of Departmental Councils each side has a secretary; each secretariat with its respective Chairman and Vice-Chairman forms a liaison group, the members of which are in constant touch and grow very familiar with the contents of each other's minds. Hosts of minor matters are thus dealt with, and negotiations are carried on between joint meetings. Partly to control and partly to facilitate these between-meeting conferences the Staff Side has made a proposal to set up a Joint General Purposes Committee and it is probable that this will be agreed to by the Council. Discussion is rather more general on Departmental Councils, although the fact that there the protagonists are in immediate official relationships tends to modify excessive independent eloquence; here again, however, much of the most valuable work is accomplished in Sectional, Grade and Special Committees which in turn report to the whole Council. Moreover it is interesting to notice that the advantages of smaller, more frequent and more informal meetings, in which speakers on both sides can say what they really think without definitely committing their side of the whole Council, are being so much recognized, that several Departmental Councils have anticipated the National Council by setting up Joint General Purposes Committees.

Finally, in the various local committees the Vice-Chairman rather introduces the views of the Staff Side than presents its case in every subject and a general talk frequently ensues. In some constitutions a provision is made whereby many local decisions may be made after informal discussion between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Such decisions are duly reported to the Committee at its next meeting and recorded in the minutes.

ACHIEVEMENTS.

Thus this system has been set up throughout the Civil Service producing an elaborate organization and involving the active co-operation of a very considerable number of men and women. So completely does Whitleyism permeate some Departments that it is computed that in the Customs and Excise alone, a thousand members

of the Service are actually concerned in its operation. This is in itself a very remarkable result of two years' working; but the mere setting up of elaborate machinery is of course not a justification of Whitleyism, indeed, except for its immediate educative effect it may well be looked upon as an unfortunate drawback.

How far then has Whitleyism secured co-operation between the State as employer and the Civil Servants as employees so as to increase the efficiency of the public service and to deal with grievances? Has it done anything to utilize the ideas and experience of the staff, to encourage the further education of Civil Servants, and in short to produce that new spirit which was the real object of Whitleyism and from which the material benefits already detailed could be expected to flow?

The National Council on its institution found itself faced with two great problems. On the one hand, the great increase in the cost of living had been met by no adjustments in the Civil Service to correspond with those made in outside industry and in the business world. On the other hand, the organization of the Service was generally admitted to be thoroughly unsatisfactory; as has already been pointed out, Lord MacDonnell's Commission had reported adversely in 1914 and had made suggestions, but the war had prevented the exploration of its recommendations and had complicated problems already sufficiently difficult of solution.

These two great problems the Council at once attacked. As a first result of its deliberations it produced the cost of living settlement.[1] This settlement has been violently attacked by Civil Servants as inadequate on two main grounds. They have claimed that the Cost of Living

[1] (*a*) The scale of bonus was fixed as follows:—
On the first £91 5s. per annum of salary, 130 per cent.
On the amount between £91 5s. and £200 per annum, 60 per cent.
On the amount over £200 per annum, 45 per cent.
(*b*) The scale was based on a cost of living index figure of 130. For the first year the bonus was to be subject to revision every four months and thereafter every six months, being increased or decreased by 1/26th of the total bonus for every five points rise or fall in the average cost of living figure for the preceding period.
(*c*) The settlement as such was applied only to officers with a salary not exceeding £500 a year, but an undertaking was given that it would in fact be extended to officers with salaries in excess of that figure, and the Staff Side accepted this undertaking as an integral part of the agreement. The maximum amount of bonus to be paid was fixed at £750 a year.

Index figure, being based on the expenditure of manual workers, is less favourable towards salaried non-manual workers whose range of expenditure is different. As a matter of fact 88 per cent. of the Civil Servants affected are in receipt of remuneration not exceeding £200 a year, so that for the vast majority the index figure is as fair a touchstone as for anybody else. They also claimed that the graduations are too steep, and point out that when the index figure was at 130 the percentage bonus on the whole salary dropped from 130 per cent. at 30s. a week, to 91 per cent. at £200 a year and again to 71 per cent. at £350 a year and 54 per cent. at £1,000 a year.[1] On the other hand it has been attacked even more fiercely by the anti-waste mongers as outrageously extravagant, and has been made the object of many threats. Between the two extremes wisdom lies, and it has been very generally recognized as the most nearly satisfactory of all the Cost of Living Bonus schemes.

The reorganization of the Clerical classes of the Civil Service was a more difficult task, and it occupied the Reorganization Committee from October, 1919, to January, 1921. An analysis of its recommendations would be beyond the scope of this pamphlet and would entail an examination of the structure and composition of the whole Civil Service, together with a discussion of its methods of recruitment.[2] These recommendations[3] were adopted by the National Whitley Council and under them the whole of the clerical classes in the Civil Service, men and women, Higher Division, Second Division, Assistant Clerks and the rest, have been reorganized into classes according to the type of work they perform; that work itself has been reclassified; rates of pay, leave periods and such like material conditions of

[1] See article "The Greedy Civil Servant," *The Civilian,* May 21st, 1921. Letter "The Case for the Civil Servant," *The New Statesman,* May 28th, 1921.

[2] *The Government of England,* Vol. I, Chapters IV-VIII, by A. Lawrence Lowell, although thrown out of date by the present reorganization, still gives a useful basis to the student. *The Civil Service Compendium,* by W. J. Brown, issued by the Clerical Officers' Association, 38a, St. George's Road, Victoria, S.W., *From Patronage to Proficiency in the Public Service,* Part I. W. A. Robson. Published by Fabian Society.

[3] *Civil Service National Whitley Council. Report of the Joint Committee on the Organization, etc., of the Civil Service.* Published, Stationery Office, February 17th, 1920; and *Reorganization Committee. Final Report.* Published by Stationery Office.

service have been revised; and the method of recruitment has been radically altered. At last an attempt has been made to make a scientific division of the work of the Service, to relate the qualities of the Civil Servant to the requirements of his employment, and to provide for something like adequate movement from one grade to another. It is too soon to pronounce on this great reorganization, to say whether the new classifications of Administrative, Executive and Clerical officers and of Writing Assistants will fulfil expectations, and whether the way opened to the Administrative class will in fact admit Executive and Clerical Officers in greater numbers than in the past; but it does at least lay down reasonable principles which will be of the utmost value in the process of developing the Civil Service, and it has had an immediate effect in removing a host of grievances which had persisted for two generations.

The carrying out of two such pieces of work in the first two years of its existence would seem in itself to furnish justification for the establishment of the National Whitley Council. It would be tedious to detail all the other matters which it has settled or is in course of considering. These have ranged from the principles and methods of promotion, a most difficult subject,[1] the demarcation of professional, scientific and technical grades in the Service, another thorny subject, and the further education of the staff,[2] to questions of sick leave, seniority on appointment, the purchase of motor-cycles for official business and so on.

At the same time the various Departmental Councils have been in operation, and it would be impossible to arrive at a conclusion as to the value of the system without some survey of the work they have performed. This has varied very much from Department to Department, partly owing to differences in the conditions of work, but very largely owing to differences in the disposition of the Departmental chiefs and in the degree of organization among members of the staffs. Such Departments as the Admiralty and the Customs and Excise have not

[1] *Committee on Promotions. First Report.* Published by Stationery Office.

[2] *Civil Service National Whitley Council. Committee on the Further Education of Civil Servants. Interim Report,* October 10th, 1920. *Second Interim Report,* May 24th, 1921, both published by Stationery Office.

built up their elaborate organizations to no purpose. The Customs and Excise Council, for example, has reorganized the whole of its main branch, the Outdoor Service, it has re-allocated work, changed salary scales and altered leave for all its officers from the higher collectors and superintending inspectors whose salary begins at £900 and rises to £1,500 a year, down through controlling grades and Surveyors, to officers whose salary begins at £120 a year. It is perhaps necessary to remark here that all Departmental reorganizations must secure the sanction of the Treasury, as representing the Government, in the ordinary way. The Customs and Excise Council, with its local committees, has reschemed the whole of the stations of the country, has introduced a system based on the unit value of work, a most important innovation in Civil Service practice, and has allocated with the minimum of discontent the prize money earned during the war. It has prepared general orders carrying out one and another of the various new Acts which the Department has been called upon to administer, and it has undertaken the consideration of ways and means for securing the utmost economy in the Department. Every sort of subject has been dealt with from details of the method of payment of Old Age Pensions to the instruction of new entrants to the Service, and from the speeding up of the supply of books and forms to office accommodation.

The Admiralty, again, has acted as a pioneer in the matter of promotion, having secured something very like co-operation between the Official and Staff Sides. The Admiralty Council, too, has considered post-war complements and other matters concerning the conditions of service of the staff. It has effected economies and improvements in the methods of registering and recording documents, and it has occupied itself with considering those technical duplicating processes so necessary to the carrying on of Admiralty work.

So, again, the Council at the Ministry of Labour has handled its own departmental reorganization, and, like that at the Admiralty, has anticipated in its departmental promotions scheme, most of the recommendations of the Promotions Committee of the National Council.

In short, in these Departments the Councils are developing the utmost co-operation between the State as

employer and the mass of Civil Servants, are utilizing the ideas and experience of the staffs and are securing to them a considerable share in and responsibility for the determination and observance of the conditions under which their duties are carried out.

Perhaps it would be too much to say that these Departments are typical of the work of Whitleyism in the Service, but at any rate they are indicative of what it is accomplishing. Departmental reorganizations, schemes for training the staffs in their duties, efforts at providing further education, discussions on promotion, attempts to assist in administration, all alike have come within the purview of one and another Council.

It is true that in some cases the Official Sides have held back and have rarely contributed towards the agenda of the Council meetings, while the Staff Sides have exhibited a tendency to concentrate unduly upon staff grievances; in some cases staff differences have made smooth working almost impossible; but the Whitley idea is making progress and the practice of the pioneer Departments is steadily spreading throughout the Service. It will be realized that the full application of a system which depends for its success upon the apprehension of its principles by the personnel of a whole Service and upon the active co-operation of so large a number of individuals of such differing ranks, could hardly be immediate, especially in view of the traditions of the Service and of the individuals concerned, indeed it is a matter for surprise that the machinery should have been so generally set up and so successfully operated in so short a time.

THE CHANGE IN STAFF STATUS.

The introduction of the Whitley System has produced a great change in the status of the staff in all Departments. At the least its existence provides a vast improvement in the methods of negotiation between the Staff and its Departmental chiefs or the Treasury. The very recognition of Trade Unionism implied in the system establishes the principle of collective bargaining. In the pre-Whitley days, negotiation, if the word could be used, was carried on by staffs standing as it were on the mat and sending in petitions. If the griev-

ance were sufficiently acute and the petitions were contemptuously ignored or ingeniously trifled with, as was usually the case, the Staff was reduced to proceed by means of Lobbying and Parliamentary questions. Under the operation of the Whitley system negotiations are more rapid, more dignified and more effective.

Along with this has come an altered relationship between Departmental chiefs and their subordinates. Perhaps nowhere were Departmental chiefs so autocratic as in the Civil Service. The almost impassable barriers between grades fortified by strong class distinctions, the general absence of staff organization, the almost universal prejudice against such organization, the tradition of permanence, and the very nature of Service forms and formalities all combined to make the Departmental chief a potentate almost unapproachable. Each chief in turn throughout the hierarchy tended to reproduce something of the conditions that prevailed above him. Thus Whitleyism has effected something very like a revolution. Right up the Service chiefs of every grade must at any rate justify themselves in discussion with their staffs. Not only so, but they must if necessary justify themselves before the whole Service. A local Collector of Customs who acted the tyrant with his staff left them in the old days practically no redress, they were a good deal more helpless than private soldiers in a similar case. Now any matter can be brought up in the local committee; the committee agenda goes directly to the Board before the meeting takes place; its minutes go to the Board and to the Departmental Council. The whole Service knows what is happening and what is at least as important, the Board as such becomes very much aware of the friction. No man likes to be made to look a fool or tyrant in discussion whether it be the principal clerk of an office or the head of a great Department of State, nobody likes to have errors of judgment or tact brought to the notice of his official chiefs; and under the Whitley System there is, therefore, the strongest possible inducement for people in authority to avoid the commission of the thousand errors of heedlessness which used to cause so much annoyance and even suffering to those committed to their care; more and more it will be impossible to judge Whitleyism entirely by the mere positive record of its minutes; the work of its thousands

of officers and local committees, of the most profound importance in regard to the smooth working of the various Departments of State, must, as time goes on, be judged very largely by negative evidence.

This altered relationship is affecting the psychology of the Civil Servant; it is changing his attitude to the daily routine which becomes in many ways less irksome. Along with this is coming a corresponding growth of a sense of responsibility for the working of each Department and of the Service as a whole, and this brings with it a perceptible lightening of the sense of futility that afflicted able men condemned to the performance of routine duties in whose direction they had no say for the greater part of a lifetime. It is almost as though what had been a machine were becoming an organism. This change is expressed in a growing appreciation of the Civil Service as a profession of which so many signs are now to be perceived. Here, then, is evidence that Whitleyism is in course of producing that new spirit which is in turn its prime object and the source of all its material success.

MAINTENANCE OF STAFF INTEREST.

It is obvious that the working of Whitleyism throws a heavy burden on the individual employees. Indeed the success of Whitleyism, and still more of any system of joint control, will depend on the ability of the employees to shoulder this burden. The Civil Service is in a favourable position to deal with the problems thus arising, for its employees are generally reasonably well-educated and often have administrative experience, while they have a fair amount of leisure. Nevertheless the strain thrown on those actively concerned in the work is almost intolerable and has already resulted in many breakdowns and retirements. The remedy seems to lie on the one hand in a more generous recognition by the Departments and the Treasury of the services performed by Staff representatives and of their virtual seconding during the period of their office, and of a similar recognition by the Staffs concerned, resulting in a more adequate provision of full-time staff, and on the other hand in such a development of public opinion in the Service as will secure the necessary supply of interested volun-

tary workers to relieve the strain and to provide the relays that may be required.

It needs but a small experience of human nature to know that the necessary development of opinion will not be purely spontaneous. Moreover, in Service Whitleyism as in Industrial Trade Unionism there is the usual tendency for those who act as Staff Side Secretaries or who sit as National and Departmental Councillors to become in their turn officialized. This has been somewhat increased by the insistence on secrecy during the course of discussions. The Staff Side has been particularly aware of the danger of this tendency and of the necessity for maintaining communication between constituent Associations and the National Council and again between the various Departments. For this purpose it has appointed a Co-ordination Officer, who issues a monthly Whitley Bulletin for circulation through the Service, and who arranges regular monthly meetings of National Councillors and Departmental Staff Side Secretaries and representatives.[1] In addition the minutes of Staff Side and joint meetings are regularly circulated to the Executive of the constituent associations. Thus the Service is kept regularly informed of the doings of its representatives.

The methods of Departmental Councils in regard to such publicity vary. Decisions affecting a Department generally are frequently communicated through the medium of official orders, but the greater part of the work is considered to be a matter for the Staff Side. The Joint Committee of Customs and Excise Associations has, since the inception of Departmental Whitleyism, issued a printed Quarterly Report, running to twelve large quarto pages, but so far this is the only Depart-

[1] The history of these meetings of Departmental Staff Side Secretaries is interesting. In the first instance they were convened on the initiative of one or two Departmental Staff Sides without reference to the National Staff Side. The meetings proved so valuable that they were continued, and a movement was made to give them a machinery of their own. At the same time the organization that was thus in process of formation showed signs of asking for direct representation on the National Council. The analogy with the shop stewards' movement is noteworthy. As any such development would have cut across the basis of Whitley representation, the National Staff Side here intervened by recognizing the meetings, by taking steps to organize them, and by taking care to secure the opinions of Departmental Staff Side Secretaries and Representatives through this machinery on every possible occasion.

ment in which such an elaborate arrangement is made. The Staff Side of the Ministry of Labour Departmental Council issues on occasion a somewhat similar though less elaborate printed report. The Admiralty Staff Side issues at irregular intervals a typed duplicated Statement of proceedings of the Departmental Council which keeps its constituents fairly constantly informed of what is going on. Other Staff Sides issue reports more or less complete at more or less frequent intervals, and on occasion publish leaflets expounding the principles of Whitleyism to the members of their Departments. In addition, various devices such as periodical congresses are resorted to in some Departments. This is all the work of Staff Sides as such. The various Staff Associations in the course of their activities are necessarily continually occupied with the discussion of Whitley matters and with the dissemination of Whitley ideas, but an examination of their reports and publications to discover the extent of this pre-occupation is hardly within our present scope. In one way and another, then, public opinion in the Service is being rapidly developed, and the interest necessary to provide the Whitley personnel is being fostered.

WHY CIVIL SERVICE WHITLEYISM SUCCEEDS.

We have now reached a stage at which it is possible to say that we have justified the statement as to Whitleyism in the Civil Service being alive and vigorous. We can defer the discussions of its possibilities until we have dealt with the question why it should have succeeded here whereas in the industrial world it has pretty generally been unsuccessful. In the industrial world there is a profound conviction that industry exists primarily for profit-making and not for service and an equally profound conviction that the interests of employers and employed are fundamentally opposed. Thus there is usually no common basis for the two sides of a Whitley Council in an industry. Moreover there is a very strong distaste on the part of employers for admitting their workers to equal discussion on details of profit and administration. Without such equal discussion and without the supply of the facts and figures necessary for

it, the Staff Side of a Whitley Council can be little more than a standing deputation. It is not very surprising then that Trade Union opinion has come to the belief that given strong Unions, direct negotiation can be secured without Whitley machinery, and that without strong Unions Whitleyism is of no advantage to the workers. In any case, Industrial Whitleyism has not secured the co-operation in administration that it set out to secure.

Now, in the Civil Service there is a complete absence of the profit-making element. Even where a Department is concerned in commercial dealings and where it may show a profit on its working like a business concern, the Official Side has not a direct pecuniary interest in those profits; they are the property of the community and not of the Departmental chiefs. There is a fundamental community of interest between the Official and the Staff Side; both alike are concerned with the efficiency of the Service. They find in that a common formula and a touchstone for all proposals from either side. Moreover, both sides alike accept the authority of Parliament as representing the consumer, while the Government in its capacity of employer is the employer of the Official Side no less than of the Staff Side and its constituents.[1]

The conditions of a State Service produce a phenomenon which cannot well occur in Industrial Whitleyism where a hard-and-fast line is drawn between employers and employed. In the Service that hard-and-fast line does not exist. In certain circumstances an officer will be on the Official Side, in other circumstances he may be on the Staff Side: thus a member of the Official Side of a local committee sits on the Staff Side of the Departmental Council as a representative of his grade; in the same way a Departmental Assistant Secretary, who on occasion sits on the Official Side of his Departmental Council, will appear on the Staff Side of the National Council where his Departmental chief figures on the Official Side. This all tends to emphasize the consciousness of an essential community of interest in carrying on the public service.

Moreover, in Service Whitley Councils the managerial and organizing elements have actually a majority of representation in actual numbers, for not only does the

[1] See Appendix I.

Official Side consist entirely of administrators, but the Staff Side includes among its members five representatives of administrative and professional classes, and the proportion in committees is frequently increased.

This comparison with Industrial Whitleyism is, perhaps, a little dangerous as tending to suggest that public ownership is the one condition necessary for success in Whitleyism. It may well be objected that public ownership and control obtain as much in the municipal as in the State Service and that municipal Whitleyism has failed at least as badly as industrial Whitleyism. But it has always been realized that a successful Whitley system is impossible unless the employers are well organized, unless they are able to arrive at a common policy and unless they are able to maintain some continuity of that policy. In the case of the State the employer is so perfectly organized that he is concentrated in a single authority. On the other hand in the case of the municipalities there is a greater multitude of employers than in almost any industry, their conditions vary enormously and they are definitely divided in regard to policy, particularly as to their relations with their employees. Further, their association is new, without traditions and without power to deal with recalcitrant authorities. There are, then, adequate explanations to account for the failure of Whitleyism in the Municipal Service despite the fact of its public character.

Although the nature of State Service makes for the success of Whitleyism while the nature of profit-making industry makes against its success, it must already have been realized from this account that it is not a magic system to work with certain success once it has been started. In the Civil Service, as we have shown, while in some Departments it has secured real co-operation, in others it has made but little real difference. Apart from the nature of ownership, then, certain conditions are needed if the system is to work. There must be genuine good faith on the part of the Government, so that agreements once entered into will be honoured. That is a fundamental. Equally there must be a real desire on both sides of the Council to work together. That again is a fundamental condition. On the Official Side there must be chiefs of a special quality, who have been willing to lay aside their old despotic power. This personal

element is in Service Whitleyism of the utmost importance. The continued working of the system may be expected to produce a modification of its importance as the general tone of Heads of Departments is changed by its atmosphere, but much of the variation in the degree of its success can be traced to the differing personalities of Departmental Heads.

On the Staff Side it is essential that there should be a backing of strong associations. Even in the Whitley system reason without power does not go far. The strongest case has very little weight unless there is the chance of organized staff trouble if it is ignored. This is very regrettable, but it cannot be helped and the fact must be faced. Again enlightened Staff Side leadership is very necessary, and once more the differing personal qualities of staff personnel have their share in explaining the varying fortunes of the system in different Departments.

Apart from all these conditions there are others which exist in the Departments where the Councils are specially successful and must have much to do with the result. Either the staffs are fairly homogeneous, as in the Post Office, the Customs and Excise, or the Ministry of Labour with Staff Associations co-extensive with the Department, or there is a most elaborate Staff Side organization to co-ordinate the various interests, as in the Admiralty; for every matter dealt with by Staff Sides must be thoroughly hammered out in discussion, and nothing must be dealt with in the Councils on which there are serious unsolved differences of opinion between the constituents. The Civil Service, with its innumerable grades and its separate class interests deliberately fostered in the past by the Treasury, is in some respects, therefore, a more difficult field for Whitleyism than an industry having large masses of workers of much the same sort. It is a commonplace of Service Whitleyism that the hardest battles are often those in Staff Side meetings, and that the most difficult step in the propaganda of a new idea is the securing of its adoption by the Staff Sides.

Where this careful staff organization for purposes of the discussion of differences and the co-ordination of interests does not exist for any reason, the Whitley system works badly.

SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS OF COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL.

It has already been stated that, according to the Whitley constitution, the Government may appoint whom it likes to represent it on the Official Side, and that in practice it has always chosen the Departmental chiefs.[1] Suggestions have been made that in some way this arrangement gives a free hand to a gang of permanent officials to decide their own salaries and their conditions of service. It has been urged that though the constitution is clearly against any such abrogation of Government authority and control, this fact is not readily grasped by the man in the street, and that the appearance of collusion is only too easily seized on by those hostile to State activity to prejudice the Whitley Council and the whole Civil Service. Accordingly proposals have been put forward for the alteration of the composition of the Official Side, by introducing a Minister as chairman and including Members of Parliament from all parties, together with representative business men to sit with a minority of permanent officials. Those who advocate this change contend that not only would it remove suspicion from the public mind, but that it would add to the authority of the Council, would remove occasions of delay, and would more completely commit the Government to its decisions. Such a Council would, it is contended, approximate to the Industrial Councils suggested in the Sankey Report[2] and would supply representatives of the State, the workers and the consumers, while at the same time bringing Parliament into close touch with the Service and maintaining its authority over the Whitley machinery.

This contention rests upon an imperfect appreciation of the position. In the first place the mere placing of

[1] See Appendix I.

[2] The Report of the Royal Commission on the Coal Mines under the Presidency of Sir John Sankey whose recommendations have already had considerable effect on public opinion, in spite of the refusal of the Government to adopt them; and whose investigations both into the condition of the mining industry and into the general problems of the administration of nationalized industry must form the basis of all further inquiries into the more particular and the more general subject. See also *The Problem of Nationalization,* being the evidence given by Lord Haldane before the Coal Commission, published by The Labour Publishing Co. Ltd., and George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

a mixed lot of M.P.'s on a Council where their differing political views will tend to cancel out their influence, would hardly bring Parliament into a closer relationship with the Council, and it would certainly not increase its authority over it. What it would do would be to embarrass very seriously the Government of the day in exercising control over the Civil Service, for it would set up a rival authority to the Cabinet.

Moreover, a Whitley Council for the Civil Service and an Industrial Council to manage an Industry, are two vastly different things, for in the one case general policy must be excluded from its purview and in the other the decision of questions of trade policy must be an essential part of its function. It would be difficult to imagine a state of affairs in which such functions as might be delegated to the Council of a particular industry could be handed over to one representing the whole Civil Service of the country whose operations extend as far as the authority of the Government itself. Such Industrial Councils might as easily be set up for the Post Office as for the Mines, for the Board of Education as for the Railways, but the consideration of such a development is outside the range of this paper, and a constitution proper to such a development would obviously be far from proper to the Civil Service as we know it.

The practical difficulties of an Official Side made up in this way are in themselves sufficiently formidable. The tax on the time of a busy Cabinet Minister would be very great, or if it were not, the consequent delays would soon reduce the Council to impotence. A Minister in this position, unless he were an almost absolute Premier, would necessarily be very chary of committing his colleagues, and it would be much more difficult for him than for the present Official Side chairman, frankly to say that on this or that matter he must consult Ministers; in effect the Official Side would be able to act with little more authority than at present. Indeed, it would have even less authority, for it would be peculiarly difficult for it to act as a side; again and again, for example, Labour representatives would find themselves in opposition to their colleagues and in sympathy with the Staff Side representatives. A Whitley Council in which voting went by show of hands, in which the Official Side con-

stantly found itself in a minority through the defection of its own members, could not endure for two meetings. It is an essential of the working of the system that, however free discussion may be, decisions must be taken by sides and must be arrived at by agreement between them. Compromise is of the essence of the arrangement, and each side must make its own compromises before the two sides meet.

There is no need to refer to the disadvantage of discussing administrative matters if the Heads of Departments concerned are absent, the effect in preventing immediate adjustments of many grievances is obvious. Enough has been said to show that the modifications suggested would be far from improving the constitution of the Council.

POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS.

How far can Whitleyism develop in a State Service in general and in the present Civil Service in particular? In the case of any great Industrial Service it is clear that the original notion of joint control has been much modified by the recognition that the consumer must be represented.[1] In a State Railway Service or a State Mining Service the employer will in effect be the Industrial Council representing the State, the workers and the consumers. Such a Council will have all and more than all the responsibility of the present Heads of Departments, its autonomy would only be subject to direction

[1] A very full discussion of the relation, in the future, between National Boards, administering particular collectivized services, and the Control Departments, which will be the organs of the Ministers of Parliament dealing with those services will be found in *A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain,* Part II, Chapters II and III. S. and B. Webb.

The authors think that there will be two sets of employees, e.g., those in the Coal Mining Administration, or the Railway or the Post Office Administration on the one hand; and those in the Control Departments concerned, like the present Railway and Mines Departments of the Board of Trade, and, say, a future Control Department of the Post Office, separate from the Post Office Administration. They think that the participation of the respective staffs will be different.

A somewhat similar division exists at the present time between the Secretariat and the remaining Staffs of most Departments; it is so fruitful a source of inefficiency and friction as to make one regard any differentiation as complete as that suggested by the Webbs with grave misgivings. In any case a close liaison between the staffs concerned would be necessary, and might best be secured by joint Staff Side committees. But the whole matter requires very careful exploration and is too big to be dealt with in the present paper.

by Parliament on the broadest questions of policy. Councils of such a sort will hardly be applicable to all services, for they depend on the existence of a reasonably defined body of consumers or at least on a fairly clear-cut function of consumption, and on the possibility of great standardization. There will, therefore, be great areas of industry and there will certainly be areas of public administration in which no such complete joint control will be possible and in which Whitleyism or something like it may be expected to operate; moreover under the Joint Councils themselves an application of Whitleyism will probably be necessary. In view of such developments an examination of the possibilities of Whitleyism in the Civil Service will be of some interest; especially since even if an approach to State Socialism does not come immediately, the Public Service must be carried on and its efficiency is of concern to the whole community.

There are certain indications, as we have shown, as to the lines along which the functions of the Whitley Councils will develop. Firstly, as regards the efficiency of the Service and the production of a true professional spirit. Secondly, as regards the discipline of the Service, and finally in respect of the relationship of the Service to the Legislature.

More and more Departmental Councils will become concerned with the technique of their Departments. This tendency is obscured where substantial grievances still exist, but it is illuminating to notice that in those Departments where fairly satisfactory reorganization schemes have been agreed and brought into operation, the Councils already are devoting much of their attention to such matters. So, again, the whole question of the further education of the Staff, both technical, administrative and cultural must be necessarily in the hands of the Councils; here there are no vested interests to deal with, and practically no official machinery is in existence. The possibilities of further education are being considered mainly because attention has been drawn to them in the setting up of Whitley Councils. Every step in the development of those possibilities is being taken as a result of the urgings of the Councils themselves, and all the machinery necessary to carry on that development must be the creation of the Councils.

An immense field is here offered for experiment and development into which one Council after another is entering. Tentative schemes are already in operation in the Ministry of Labour, the Customs and Excise Department, the Overseas Trade Department, the Scottish Board of Health, the Board of Agriculture, and the Inland Revenue Department, while every encouragement is being given by the Staff Side of the National Whitley Council to the institution of similar experiments in other Departments.[1] Progress must necessarily be slow, especially in view of the financial condition of the country, but in a decade or so it may be expected that a complete system of further education will be at work.

Both efficiency and discipline are involved in the questions of promotion and of the transfer of personnel from one Department to another. Already as has been pointed out, the promotion problem has received attention. In its first report the Committee on Promotion has laid down important principles and has recommended the setting up of certain machinery. It has been agreed that "the consideration ruling all promotions should be the advancement of the efficiency of the public service, and that this can only be secured by determining promotions on the ground of fitness." It has been recommended that Promotion Boards should be set up in each Department for the purpose of making recommendations for promotion to the Head of the Department. In order that these Boards may arrive at their decisions a system of annual reports has been instituted, and the Staff Sides of the various Whitley Councils have been empowered to make representations in regard to promotions.

Thus a general system has been substituted for the chaos which hitherto prevailed. It is true that the staffs are not represented on the Promotion Boards and thus the Whitley Councils do not take over the responsibility of the Heads of Departments; on the other hand, the principle of joint discussion has been accepted, and this is rightly regarded by the Service as being of the utmost importance.

What the eventual developments of the promotion system may be it is of course impossible to say, but it

[1] A synopsis of the progress made in the various Departments was given in the *Whitley Bulletin* for February, 1922.

seems probable that the Whitley Councils will in due course take over the scrutiny of the annual reports, and will eventually either absorb the Promotion Boards or will place a member of the Staff Side on each of them. This would make the Councils responsible for recommendations for promotion without affecting the responsibility of the Heads of Departments for the actual making of promotions. Any further step to make Whitley Councils the final promoting authority may well follow on the organization of one or two industries on the lines suggested in the Sankey Report or the Miners' Bill for the Nationalization of the Mines, but it cannot precede it and need not be considered here.

The transfer of personnel from one Department to another, and even within Departments from one branch to another, has always been attended with the greatest difficulty; yet administrators are agreed that the flexibility which would result from reasonably free transfers would be in the interests of the efficiency of the Public Service, and any satisfactory system would go far to remove the familiar square peg from the round hole, the presence of which plays such havoc with Service happiness. It is evident that the solution of this problem must be produced by the National Whitley Council; whatever principles may be established and whatever machinery may be devised, it is tolerably certain that in time the Councils themselves will have a considerable share in the operation of the system.

Again it is generally recognized that the Public Service suffers from too much Departmentalism, that Departments are too isolated, and that no satisfactory co-ordinating agency exists. The remedy or remedies for this state of affairs are not easy to find, but already the possibilities of the National Council as a co-ordinating agency are beginning to be appreciated, and its work in this direction is capable of great extension.

The relationship of the Administration to the Legislature is much under discussion. Parliament has no direct access to the experts of the Civil Service whose knowledge and advice can only reach Members through the mouths of Ministers. The presence of Heads of Departments in Committee when measures affecting their Departments are under consideration has been strongly advocated. In the event of this advocacy being success-

ful, the way will be open to an extension of the consultation to the Departmental Whitley Councils concerned. There would be in this event a distinct departure from the constitutional principle which makes Ministers solely responsible for policy, but its effect would be to transfer a proportion of that responsibility to Parliament rather than to the Civil Servant. The business of the Civil Servant would be to give information and advice, the adoption or rejection of the advice would depend on the elected representatives guided by the Cabinet. Any consultation of this kind would perhaps accompany or pave the way for the adoption of control of industry by Joint Councils.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that Whitleyism in the Civil Service has worked, is working and is likely to develop. It has dealt with some large and many small staff grievances, it has accomplished some very considerable administrative achievements, and it seems destined to have an increasing share in the work of Service administration. At any rate it has demonstrated that the old autocratic methods of control are unnecessary, and that it is possible, under certain conditions, to secure co-operation between an employing authority and the general body of its employees.

Appendix I

ABOLITION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ARBITRATION BOARD.

While this account of the Whitley System in the Civil Service was being written I had in mind the existence of the Arbitration Board, and the peculiar constitution of the Official Side with its purely Service personnel. No hint had been given that any change in these two fundamentals was contemplated and the MS. was actually in the printers' hands when on February 21st, 1922, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretaries of the National Council were summoned to meet the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They were then informed that the Cabinet had decided to abolish the Arbitration Board and also to alter the composition of the Official Side by placing M.P.'s upon it. The announcement took the Staff representatives completely by surprise. It was repeated publicly the next day in the House of Commons when, in reply to a question, Sir Robert Horne made the following statement: "His Majesty's Government have been considering this matter. The conditions which led to the establishment of the Civil Service Arbitration Board some five years ago have been entirely changed by the formation of Whitley Councils for the discussion of questions affecting the remuneration and conditions of service of civil servants; and the Government have come to the conclusion that the continuance of the present arrangements for compulsory arbitration are inconsistent with, and to some extent militate against, the development of these Councils on the best lines. They have accordingly decided that the time has now come for bringing the present arbitration arrangements to an end. They have decided, also, that under these altered conditions it would be desirable to strengthen the National Whitley Council for the Civil Service by the appointment of some Members of this House who would form part of the Official Side."

No mention is made here of the Geddes Report, but the following statement from Chapter VIII of the Third Report of Committee on National Expenditure must undoubtedly be considered in connection with the Government decision:

"Whatever justification there may have been in time of war for setting up such a body (the Civil Service Arbitration Board), whose awards are final and who can thus

authorize expenditure without the authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, we are very strongly of opinion that the main justification for the existence of the Board has disappeared with the institution of the Whitley Councils in the Civil Service. It has now become the established practice in the Civil Service to consider on these Whitley Councils questions of remuneration . . . and, in these circumstances, we are of opinion that the need for a standing Arbitration Board no longer exists."

At the time of writing a number of cases are still outstanding before the old Board. No meeting of the full Council has yet been held and no definite information is available as to the method of selecting the M.P.'s for the Official Side. The indication is, however, that a Minister will take the chair and that all the M.P.'s will be supporters of the Government.[1] Thus there is no actual experience of the new conditions.

I see no reason to vary the judgment I passed in the text that some independent tribunal is vital to the proper working of the Whitley System, especially in the Civil Service, which cannot normally resort to direct action.

The constitutional issue raised in the Geddes Report is a serious one, but it is one that has already been faced elsewhere. The Government, as purchaser or as vendor, is constantly submitting to the awards of arbitrators who, in effect, "authorize expenditure without the authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer." Clearly the Government as employer should submit like any other employer, or like itself as a dealer in property, to the decision of an independent tribunal. The old Arbitration Board was set up by Cabinet authority and was, perhaps, objectionable as a relic of war-time emergency regulations, but any new tribunal would, of course, be set up under the authority of Parliament.

It is obvious that the presence of Government M.P.'s on the Official Side will not render it more impartial nor remove the need for an Arbitration Board. On the contrary it will enormously strengthen the Government as employer and will render any appeal to the House of Commons much more difficult.

Sir Robert Horne suggested that the existence of the Board was inconsistent with and militated against the development of Whitley Councils on the best lines. No doubt Staff Sides have at times been rather stiff because of the chance of an appeal, but on the other hand on numerous occasions the presence of the Board in the background has

[1] On March 23rd, it was announced that three M.P.'s from the Government benches would be appointed.

rendered the Treasury willing to negotiate when otherwise it would have sat tight.

There are those who say that without the Arbitration Board Whitleyism is absolutely no use. I do not share that extreme view; but I do think that a Court of Appeal is necessary to the proper working of the System, and I am convinced that without it the value of Whitleyism will be much reduced. Nevertheless, so valuable is the Whitley machinery that even should the re-establishment of an independent tribunal be considerably delayed, it would be a disaster to the Service and to the State if, as a result of this attack, it were allowed to be destroyed.

J. H. M-G.
March 16th, 1922.

Appendix II

List of Departments in which Whitley Councils have been established.

ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

Admiralty.
Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of (including Ordnance Survey).
Agriculture, Board of, Scotland.
Air Ministry.
*Charity Commissioners.
Civil Service Commission.
Colonial Office.
Commissary Office, H.M.
Customs and Excise.
Education, Board of.
Exchequer and Audit.
Food, Ministry of.
Foreign Office.
Friendly Societies, Registry of.
General Board of Control (Scotland).
Government Chemist.
Health, Ministry of.
Health, Scottish Board of.
Health, Welsh Board of.
Home Office.
India Office.
Insurance Audit Department, National.
Inland Revenue.
Labour, Ministry of.
Land Registry.
Mint, Royal.
Munitions, Ministry of.
Museum, British (including Natural History).
National Debt Office.
National Gallery.
National Galleries of Scotland.
National Gallery of British Art.
Overseas Trade, Dept. of.
Pensions, Ministry of.
Paymaster-General.
Post Office (Administrative).
Post Office (Engineering & Stores).
Prison Commission, Scotland.
Privy Council Office.
Procurator General and Treasury Solicitor.
Public Trustee.
Public Prosecution, Director of.
Public Works Loan Board.
Record Office.
Registrar-General's Office.
Registry, Principal Probate
Registrar-General (Scotland).
Royal Court of Justice and Bankruptcy Buildings Attendants.
Registry of Sasine.
Scientific and Industrial Research Dept.
Science Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum.

Scottish Education Department.
Scottish Office.
Shipping, Ministry of.
Supreme Court Pay Office.
Stationery Office.
Supreme Court Offices (other than Probate Registry and Lunacy Dept.)
Trade, Board of.
Treasury.
Wallace Collection.
War Office.
*War Savings Committee (National).
Woods and Forests, Board of.
Works, Office of.

* Not under the National Council.

IRELAND.

Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland).
Congested Districts Board (Ireland).
Dublin Castle Departments.
Deeds, Registrar of (Dublin).
Education Board, Ireland, National.
Education Board, Ireland, Intermediate.
General Valuation and Boundary Survey (Ireland).
Health Insurance Commission (Ireland).
Land Commission, Irish.
Local Government Board, Ireland.
Metropolitan Police Courts, Dublin.
Public Records Office (Ireland).
Public Works (Dublin), Commission of.
Treasury Solicitor (Ireland), Office of.

Appendix III

Departmental Council of H.M. Customs and Excise Department.

SECTIONAL AND GRADE COMMITTEES.

S. Outdoor Service.
S. Waterguard.
S. Temporary Staffs.
G. Controlling Grade.
G. Surveyors.
G. Officers.
G. Waterguard Superintendents and Chief Preventive Officers.
G. Preventive Officers.
G. Preventive Men.
G. Launch Services.
G. Watchers.
G. Temporary Women Pension Officers.

OFFICE COMMITTEES.

Secretaries.
Chief Inspectors.
Statistical.
A. & C. Gs.
Solicitors.
Office Keepers.
Stores Branch.

LOCAL COMMITTEES.

Bangor.
Bath.
Birmingham.
Bolton.
Bradford.
Brighton.
Bristol.
Burton.
Cambridge.
Cardiff.
Carlisle.
Chester.
Croydon.
Derby.
Douglas.
Dover.
Exeter.
Grimsby.
Harwich.
Hereford.
Hull.
Ipswich.
Leeds.
Leicester.
Liverpool (Customs).
Liverpool (Excise).
London (Central).
London (North).
London (South).
London (West).

London (Long Room).
London (Port).
London (Waterguard).
Manchester.
Middlesbrough.
Newcastle.
Newhaven.
Newport (Mon.)
Northampton.
Norwich.
Nottingham.
Plymouth.
Portsmouth.
Preston.
Reading.
Sheffield.
Southampton.
Sunderland.
Swansea.
Weymouth.
Wolverhampton.
Worcester.
York.

SCOTLAND.

Aberdeen.
Campbeltown.
Dumfries.
Dundee.
Edinburgh.
Elgin.
Glasgow (Customs).
Glasgow (Excise).
Greenock.
Inverness.
Leith.
Perth.
Stirling.

IRELAND.

Belfast.
Cork.
Dublin.
Dundalk.
Galway.
Limerick.
Londonderry.
Waterford.

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